



## **Town of Warren, Rhode Island**

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# **Minutes of the Economic Development Board**

The Town of Warren, RI Economic Development Board met at a Regular Meeting on November 19, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall, located at 514 Main Street. The presiding officer was Brandt Heckert. Board members present were Sara Volino, Mark Lombari, Karen Dionne, Spencer Morris, Christine Lichatz and Benjamin Terry. Board member Kate Dickson was absent. Ex officio member Caroline Wells was absent. Kristin MacDonald was present at the meeting to serve as Secretary to the EDB.

### **1. Review and Approval of Minutes from the Regular Meeting of October 22, 2012**

The minutes from the regular meeting held on October 22, 2012 were reviewed by the members via email. Ms. Volino made a motion to accept the minutes, the motion was seconded by Mr. Terry and all members were in favor.

### **2. Report from Gateway Signage Workgroup**

At this time the Signage workgroup is waiting for permission from the state before the gateway signs on the Warren-Bristol lines can be installed. Ms. Lichatz will coordinate the landscaping around the new signs in the spring. The workgroup members plan on meeting in the future to discuss the coordination of future wayfinding signage.

### **3. Report from Tax Study Workgroup**

Mr. Morris and Mr. Terry discussed an outline of the goals and objectives of the tax study workgroup. The board discussed ways to promote the current tax stabilization programs, as well as ways to use these programs as an economic driver for the town. The board also discussed the need for an informed business point person in Town Hall. One priority is to have information about the tax stabilization programs on the town website. Mr. Terry also discussed working with Caroline Wells to compare tax programs in other communities and possibly meeting with Alan Crisman, the director of the Mount Hope Enterprise Zone. After gathering research, the Tax Study Workgroup will present a recommendation to Town Council.

### **4. Update on the possible sale of the Tourister property**

Mr. Heckert informed the Board that there are two potential bids to develop the American Tourister property: an offer from Bristol Marine for a commercial development, and a second offer for residential development. Both bids for the property are sealed. The Board briefly discussed the need to develop an economic identity for the town. Mr. Heckert stated that the Board might need to develop a statement regarding the development of this property in the future.

#### **5. Discussion to utilize business outreach funding from the Planner's budget**

The Board discussed the available business outreach funding for the upcoming year. There is \$25,000 available with \$20,000 earmarked for the storefront improvement program. The Board discussed the best way to utilize the remaining \$5,000 to promote the program. Suggestions included printing flyer to hand out to business and property owners, as well as placing an advertisement in the Warren Times. The Board also discussed the possibility of using a portion of the funds to hire a point person help coordinate the program. Mr. Heckert said he would discuss this issue further with Caroline Wells.

#### **6. Discussion to create a database of available commercial space**

The Board discussed the possibility of creating an extensive list of the available commercial spaces in Warren. After considering the most efficient way to compile a list and keep it current, the Board discussed the possibility of using a commercial real estate service like LoopNet.

The next EDB meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 17, 2012.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Morris, the motion was seconded by Ms. Volino, and all members were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

The next meeting of the EDB is scheduled for Monday, November 19, 2012.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristin M. MacDonald

November 16, 2012

